

The Status Report

November 2007 | Volume 3, Issue 9

Charles F. Hurley Building, 19 Staniford St., 6th Floor, Boston, MA 02114
Web: www.mass.gov/women Phone: 617-626-6520 E-Mail: mcsw@state.ma.us



Third Annual Massachusetts Conference for Women December 11th



On **Tuesday, December 11th** Public Strategies, Inc., in conjunction with the MCSW, will host the Massachusetts Conference for Women at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center. The Conference is a non-profit, non-partisan, one-day event where Massachusetts women can connect, learn practical and professional strategies from nationally recognized experts, and network with peers.

The Conference first opened its doors in 2005, and has grown to hopefully this year attract more than 5,000 attendees and truly impact lives. In a very unique way, the Conference builds connections, enhances collaboration and embodies community.

This year's program will feature panelists who are eager to share their experiences and opinions with participants of all ages, from all across the state. This year's Keynote Speakers are Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and best-selling author **Anna Quindlen**, business journalist and former editor of the *Harvard Business Review* **Suzy Welch**, former General Electric CEO **Jack Welch**, and author of *Good Enough Mother: The Perfectly Imperfect Book of Parenting* and anchor for CBS News's *The Early Show* **Rene' Syler**.

More than 75 renowned experts in the fields of health and wellness, business and finance, community involvement, career development, and personal growth will be featured in breakout sessions throughout the day.

In addition to keynote addresses, there will be a Young Women's Forum for junior and senior high school students, featuring speakers and topics that encourage young women to maximize their potential. Inspiring women will also be honored with the Be the Change Award.

The Conference also offers a robust exhibit hall where approximately 100 exhibitors will have present a myriad of new products and services.

Full Conference registration is \$125 before November 10th and will increase to \$135 on November 11th. This fee includes continental breakfast, Conference sessions with expert panelists, the Keynote Luncheon, exhibit access and a networking reception. Individuals with a valid student ID may register for \$60.

For more information please call 866-747-2899 or visit www.maconferenceforwomen.org.

Inside This Issue

Executive Director's Corner	2
Legislative Corner	3
Commissioner Corner	3
Spotlight on Brookline Commission	4
Lung Cancer Awareness	5
Osteoporosis in Massachusetts	6
Upcoming Events	7

Executive Director's Corner



Members of the administration, legislators, advocates and activists gathered at the State House yesterday for the release of an important piece of research – *Bridging the Gaps: Making Work Work for Massachusetts' Families*. The report examines the sad truth that while it is generally assumed that holding a steady job is enough to make ends meet, most workers don't make ends meet on their wages alone.

Bridging the Gaps is a multiyear project led by the McCormack Graduate School's Center for Social Policy at the University of Massachusetts Boston and the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington, D.C., in partnership with organizations in nine states and the District of Columbia. The report was authored by Dr. Randy Albelda and Jennifer Shea, PhD candidate.

While the results of the research are sobering, the promise demonstrated by the participation of those assembled is encouraging. Speakers acknowledged that the report provides valuable "ammunition" to address the highlighted issues and comes at a unique moment in time, when the administration, the legislature and a strong advocacy community are aligned to create change. A holistic address, to include pathways for people to engage wherever they are at in the continuum, was noted and appears hopeful given the women at the table –Marilyn Anderson Chase, undersecretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Julia Kehoe, Commission of the Department of Transitional Assistance, Amy Schectman, Associate Director of Public Housing and Rental Assistance, Dept. of Housing and Community Development, Ann Reale, Commissioner of the Department of Early Education and Care, and Jennifer James, Undersecretary of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development. They were joined by Senator Karen Spilka, co-chair of the Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities and Khymi Woo, a One Family scholar.

The report focuses on identifying the gaps between earnings and basic needs, and suggests ways to bridge these gaps. The following information is quoted directly from the report's executive summary:

Despite playing by the rules, many families, especially those with one adult earner, are struggling to survive. Families who cannot make their ends meet with their earnings and public supports face a **hardships gap**. These families include members who work, but whose earnings, coupled with any supports they receive, do not lift them above the basic costs associated with living in Massachusetts. And while supports help, for a substantial number of families, they are not enough. **Close to 900,000 people - one of every four people - in Massachusetts faces this gap between their resources and a no-frills standard of living in the Bay State.**

In addition, low-and moderate-wage earners find themselves with an **eligibility gap**. They make too much to get public supports but earn too little to pay all their bills. **Thirty-seven percent of these people are also ineligible for any of the six work support programs.**

Finally, there is a substantial group of people who face a public support **coverage gap**. These people are eligible for work supports but for a range of reasons do not receive them.

The report notes that one primary reason that the hardships gap exists is that too many jobs pay too little. In 2004, of the close to 6.5 million people in Massachusetts, one out of every four live in a family whose income is less than \$28,000 (compared to the family median income of \$59,600). In the same year, 46 percent of workers report not having or using employer-sponsored health insurance and 51 percent do not have employer-sponsored pensions. Twenty-eight percent of all jobs in Massachusetts in 2005 pay less than \$16.50 an hour and offer neither employer-sponsored health insurance nor a pension. *(Continued on Page 5.)*



Commissioner Corner: Spotlight on Vice Chair Gloria Coney

At the September's Full Commission meeting Commissioners elected Gloria Coney to the position of Vice Chair. Coney was appointed as a Commissioner by the Caucus of Women Legislators on March 1, 2005 and has served on the Commissions' Legislative & Public Policy Committee and Chaired the Outreach & Advocacy Committee during her tenure. She served as the Mistress of Ceremonies for the 2007 Equal Pay Day event, a presenter for the State of Women Research Report, and has been an integral member of the selection committee for the annual Unsung Heroines event.

Coney, currently the coordinator of the Malden Everett Family Network, is a leader with over 20 years of management, education, facilitation and training experience which she has used to support the growth, education and empowerment of adults and children. She is a Roxbury resident and one of many grandparents who has raised grandchildren. On the Commission, Commissioner Coney is particularly committed to representing and providing a voice to women of color and other marginalized populations.

Recently Coney was a part of the ground-breaking workplace discrimination case *Trustees of Health and Hospitals of the City of Boston, Inc. vs. Massachusetts*. During the case the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD) adopted a hearing commissioner's determination that the Trustees of Health and Hospitals of the City of Boston, Inc. (Trustees), unlawfully discriminated against five former employees on the basis of their race (African American) and gender (female) by subjecting them to harsh treatment in the implementation of layoffs in July of 1994. The persistence of Coney and her former co-workers over the 13 year case paid off as they were awarded damages for emotional distress, plus attorney's fees and costs. The case set a precedent for future discrimination cases in Massachusetts.

As President of GC (Gloria Coney) Unlimited, Coney represents parents of children with special needs in Massachusetts and she conducts parenting classes for grandparents who are raising their grandchildren. She is the past President of Delta Sigma Theta, Inc.'s Boston Alumnae Chapter and has served on various other boards and commissions. As a Commissioner on the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women, Gloria advocates for the safety and prosperity of all women and has a particular interest in the elimination of racism and discrimination.

Legislative Corner: Paid Sick Days Hearing November 6th

An Act Establishing Paid Sick Days will be heard next Tuesday, November 6th at 10am, Room B2, State House. House Bill 1803/Senate Bill 1073 would ensure that all Massachusetts workers have a minimum of seven days of paid time off annually to take care of their own health needs and those of family members. Almost half (47%) of Massachusetts workers lack a single guaranteed paid sick day.

Guaranteeing seven earned paid sick days annually provides the following benefits:

- Reduces the spread of disease at work, creating public health benefits,
- Allows workers time off to care for a sick child and not have to worry that they may lose their job,
- Provides workers time to care for an infirm elderly parent.
- Allows workers time to deal with their own health problems.

On Monday November 5th, the Massachusetts Paid Leave Coalition, of which the MCSW is a member, is organizing a Paid Sick Days "call in" day. Please call your state representative & senator and let them know that we must guarantee all Massachusetts workers paid sick days. (State House Phone # 617-722-2000)

Hi, my name is _____. I live in _____. I am calling regarding House Bill 1803/Senate Bill 1073; An Act Establishing Paid Sick Days. Please support ensuring that all Massachusetts workers have seven paid sick days annually. This helps 1.48 million workers who currently lack any paid sick leave. Thank you for your support, my phone number is _____.

After you place your calls, please email mcsw@state.ma.us and let us know your name and which legislators you contacted, and the response that you received. Thank you for your support.

Commission Corner: Spotlight on Brookline Commission for Women

The last three years have been a period of revitalization for the Brookline Commission for Women (BCW). After several years of being defunct, it now has 10 appointed members and has become a significant contributor in the community through a variety of programs and initiatives which support and promote women. The mission of the BCW is *The Brookline Commission for Women strives to support women in all aspects of their lives and to promote the cultural, racial, and economic diversity of Brookline*. To achieve this mission, the BCW has compiled the following list of goals:

- To make the BCW visible as a resource for women in Brookline.
- To collect and disseminate information on women's issues.
- To cooperate with other town agencies, other women's commissions, and other service organizations for addressing women's issues.
- To raise funds in support of its mission.
- To offer programming consistent with its mission.
- To bring women in Brookline together.

The BCW has worked diligently over the last year to produce programs and activities to enable it to fulfill its goals. The following is a highlight of some of the BCW's recent programs and activities:

Each January, the BCW hosts a ***Dress for Success*** clothing drive. *Dress for Success* is a not-for-profit organization that offers services to underprivileged women entering the workforce. At its 2007 clothing drive, the BCW collected over 1,000 items of clothing which were given to *Dress for Success* and the Elizabeth Stone House. The BCW's 3rd *Dress for Success* clothing drive will be held on January 25th and 26th, 2008 in the Community Room at the Brookline Police Department.

Additionally, each spring, the BCW hosts its annual ***Women Who Inspire Us Essay Contest and Awards Ceremony***. This event promotes the recognition of women in our community doing exceptional work and making real, positive impacts on the lives of children and women in Brookline. Nine middle schools students are recognized for heartfelt essays about a woman who inspires them and the Brookline Woman of the Year is named.

In October of 2006, the BCW also hosted a ***Forum on the Status of Women in Brookline***. This Forum featured a panel of local experts who educated the public and BCW members on the status of women in their respective fields. Panelists included the Brookline Chief of Police, a former selectwoman, the executive director of the Brookline Community Foundation, the Director of Brookline Economic Development and the Community Health Officer from the Brookline Department of Health.

This past summer, the BCW, in cooperation with the Recreation and Health Departments, started a ***Women's Walking Group***. These walks have been an enormous success and currently over 75 women in the community have signed up to participate. This program has reached a broad spectrum of women in the community that reported that they were looking for an opportunity to walk with other women, make friends and get fit!

Most recently, the BCW partnered with the Brookline Police Department, the Department of Public Health, the Jennifer Lynch Committee, St. Paul's Church, the Brookline Rotary and Brookline Adult and Community Education to bring a reading of *Body and Sold* to Brookline. *Body and Sold* is a documentary play highlighting the issue of sex trafficking and exploitation of teens in America. The reading was held on October 3rd, during Domestic Violence Awareness Month, at the Brookline High School and raised over \$5,000 for the Brookline Teen Center.

This coming March, to kick off National Women's History Month, the BCW will be co-sponsoring a celebration of *Women in Business*. It has pulled together a diverse and dynamic panel of local women business owners to discuss their experiences, struggles and successes.

The BCW has just begun collaboration with the Brookline Department of Health and Brookline Adult and Community Education to bring women's health seminars to the community. Focusing on breast cancer, cervical cancer and heart disease prevention, these 55 minute seminar presentations that will be offered throughout the community with a focus on women most at-risk and with the least access to education and prevention materials.

Through these efforts the BCW has truly become a recognized, involved and respected organization within its community and the MCSW commends the BCW's members on their remarkable work.

November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month



Elaine F. Guiney

When asked what the leading cancer killing women today is, most people would name breast cancer. They would be wrong. Lung cancer kills more women annually than any other cancer, yet most of us are dangerously unaware of the warning signs of this disease.

In 2004 lung cancer hit close to home as the MCSW lost one of its Commissioners, Elaine F. Guiney, to a very short battle with lung cancer. Guiney was appointed as a Commissioner in November 2000 by the Caucus of Women Legislators. She was reappointed in November 2003 to serve another three-year term and was about to serve as Chair of the MCSW when she passed away in February 2004. Guiney was honored posthumously in 2006 with The Silent Force Award by The National Lung Cancer Alliance as they launched a national fundraising campaign to raise awareness, increase research dollars and combat the disease.

Her experience highlighted for the MCSW just how little women know about the disease. Below are some statistics on lung cancer to help educate on this disease as awareness is the first step to early detection, which leads to a higher rate of survival.

- Research shows that women are approximately 1.5 times more likely to develop lung cancer than men.
- Lung cancer will kill approximately 68,510 women in the U.S. this year -- more than breast and ovarian cancer combined. Lung cancer deaths surpassed breast cancer deaths in 1987.
- Lung cancer deaths among women skyrocketed about 150% over the last two decades, while the number for men increased by 20%. Between 1950 and 1997, deaths from lung cancer among women increased by more than 600%.
- The U.S. Surgeon General reports that in a hospital-based study, the odds for lung cancer were higher among black women than among white women at each level of tar exposure.
- Thanks to new treatments, the cure rate for lung cancer has doubled over the last 30 years.
- Early detection is critical. When caught early, most lung cancers can be cured.

Sources: American Cancer Society (2004), *Cancer Facts & Figures - 2004*. Atlanta, GA.

(...Continued from Page 2.)

Based on these findings, the authors argue that everyone should have more opportunities to meet their needs and suggest three, non mutually exclusive, options.

- Work to raise wages to close the hardships gap so that every worker can support his/her family at a safe and decent standard of living.
- Require all employers, even low-wage employers and small businesses, to provide necessary benefits to their employees, so that every job becomes a "good" job.
- Improve the set of public work supports available to all workers. Some of these supports, in particular child care, would be much more effective if provided universally.

While the report is not gender specific, the impact on women and the Commission's priority of wage equity for women, is another piece of the puzzle, and another gap that must be bridged. Seventy-two percent of families living below the federal poverty line in Massachusetts are headed by single mothers. When women earn as much as their male counterparts they are better able to adequately care for themselves and their families. We look forward to helping this report have a real impact on the women and girls of Massachusetts.

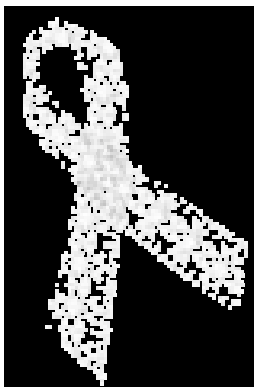
Commission Supports Equitable Coverage in Annuity Policies Bill

Gloria Coney, Vice-Chair of the MCSW, delivered testimony in favor of "An Act to Provide for the Equitable Coverage in Annuity Policies" (S622, H901) to the Joint Committee on Financial Services at the State House on October 10th. The Commission supports the bill because it is aligned with the organization's mission to bring women to full equality in the Commonwealth.

Presently, gender-neutral individual policies that will provide lifetime income are not marketed in the Commonwealth, even though, under federal law, all employment-based annuities must be gender neutral. Massachusetts has made great strides in doing away with discriminatory practices in other areas of insurance coverage. The Commission and other supporters believe it is time to eliminate gender bias in annuities. The Commission has asked legislators to support the bill and show women throughout the state that Massachusetts is serious about ending gender discrimination in insurance policies and that it is committed to the economic fairness and security of women.

For more information please contact Outreach Coordinator Jill Ashton at jill.ashton@state.ma.us.

Osteoporosis Awareness Month: Massachusetts Women & Osteoporosis



An estimated 8 million women in the U.S. have osteoporosis. And 40% of women age 50 or older will experience an osteoporosis-related fracture in their lifetime. Osteoporosis also affects men, but to a lesser extent. For those at risk for or who have osteoporosis, prevention and treatment are the best defenses.

Osteoporosis is a medical condition characterized by diminished bone strength and increased risk of fracture. Most people think of their bones as being solid as a rock. Actually, bone is a living tissue, just like other parts of the body—your heart, brain, or skin for example. Bone just happens to be a harder type of tissue. Bone is always changing. Your body keeps your bones strong and healthy by replacing old bone with new bone. After menopause the body removes more bone than it replaces which in many women may lead to osteoporosis. Osteoporotic bones are weaker and are more likely to break. Postmenopausal osteoporosis can be prevented, and with proper therapy it can be treated.

Who is affected?

Osteoporosis is estimated to have caused 50,000 bone fractures in Massachusetts in 2005, at a cost of over \$400 million. Fracture cost is projected to grow to \$528 million by 2025, mostly paid by Medicare and Medicaid. Many of these fractures and their debilitating consequences can be prevented by identifying individuals at risk and swiftly intervening.

Women accounted for 74% of estimate direct medical costs of osteoporosis in 2005. In Massachusetts, people hospitalized with osteoporotic fractures averaged 5.8 days in the hospital in 2000, and 52% were discharged to nursing homes. Medicaid pays about half of long-term care costs, or \$85 million 2005. Medicare Advantage plans to bear risk for hospital costs.

Diagnosis

Because bone loss is gradual and without warning signs, women often do not seek medical treatment until they experience a bone fracture. That's why osteoporosis is often called a "silent disease." To prevent the complications caused by osteoporosis, postmenopausal women should undergo a bone density test to determine the condition of their bones. If you are over age 50 and have other risks for osteoporosis such as the ones listed below a bone density test could be your first step to understanding your risk for fracture.

Risk Factors

Answering the following questions may help you to determine if you are at risk for osteoporosis-related fractures.

- Are you postmenopausal?
- Have you had a bone fracture after age 50?
- Did your mother suffer a fracture after age 50?
- Do you weigh less than 125 pounds?
- Are you taking oral medicines such as cortisone or prednisone?
- Do you currently smoke?
- Do you need your arms to stand up from a chair?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may be at risk for osteoporosis-related fractures and should talk to your doctor.

While it may sound somewhat intimidating, a bone density test is one of the safest, most accurate ways to measure bone density and provide information about your bone health. Since you can't see or feel bone loss, this test is a way to tell if you have or are at risk for osteoporosis. Knowing your bone mineral density test result (which is called a T-score), your doctor can tell if you have lost bone and if you are at increased risk for fracture.

Understanding your risk for osteoporosis is the first step to preventing fractures. With this knowledge you can develop a strategy with your doctor that may include a diet rich in calcium, dietary supplements, exercise, and in some cases, prescription medicines. Your bones will thank you for taking this small but important first step.

Thanks to the generosity of Procter and Gamble, the MCSW and the National Association of Commissions on Women, have "Healthy Bones", a comprehensive, ready made curriculum available to educate and advocate about this important issue. If you would like to access the curriculum and utilize this invaluable tool, please contact the MCSW at 617-626-6520 for more information.

Take Action. Get Educated. Get Involved.

If you are interested in becoming more involved in the movement to advance women in the Commonwealth you can start by attending any one of the number of events and meetings taking place across the state in the coming weeks.

Saturday, November 3 (9:00 a.m.): Boston Area Lung Cancer Walk/Fun Run

Location: Castle Island (South Boston)

Details: Please join lung cancer advocates for the [2nd Annual Boston Area Lung Cancer Walk/Fun Run](#) in South Boston during Lung Cancer Awareness Month. Your \$25 registration fee will go to LUNgevity Foundation and will directly support lung cancer research. Help raise awareness and end the stigma associated with the disease. For more information and to register, please contact Stacy O'Connell at info@bostonlungcancerwalk.com or visit their website at www.bostonlungcancerwalk.com.

Tuesday, November 6 (10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.): Bill Hearing for S1073/H1803 An Act Establishing Paid Sick Days

Location: State House, Room B-2 (Boston)

Details: The legislature, in order to advance healthier, more productive and more equitable workplaces throughout the Commonwealth, and to promote the health and welfare of families within the Commonwealth, hereby direct all employers to provide a minimum of 7 paid sick days per year, or the appropriate percentage thereof as determined by this Act, for all of their employees.

Friday, November 9 (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.): 2007 Non-Profit Workout

Location: Omni Parker House, 60 School Street (Boston)

Details: Third Sector New England hosts the 11th Annual Non-Profit Workout. There is a revolution going on in thinking about nonprofit leadership. Come learn new strategies and exchange ideas that may transform you and your organization. *At only \$169 for a full day of workshops with world-renowned trainers*, the 11th Nonprofit Workout is designed to be informative, inspiring and energizing. The conference is less than a month away, so register now at www.tsne.org - several workshops have already reached capacity!

Thursday, November 15 (1:00 p.m.): MassGAP 2006 Report Release

Location: UMass Club, 225 Franklin Street, 33rd Floor (Boston)

Details: MassGAP 2006, in conjunction with the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy at UMass Boston, has conducted an extensive study of women in appointed positions in Massachusetts government from 2000 to 2006. This event is open to the leadership and membership of MassGAP's participating and sponsoring organizations, as well as their financial sponsors, but space is limited. *Please RSVP by November 12 to info@massgap.org*. Following the release on November 15, the complete report will be available online at www.massgap.org.

Monday, November 19 (3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.): Massachusetts Coalition for Women's Wage Equality Meeting

Location: Charles F. Hurley Building, Room 307C (19 Staniford Street, Boston)

Details: Members of the MA Coalition for Women's Wage Equality will meet to discuss next steps in passing wage equity-related legislation and hosting pay equity events. Anyone interested in joining this growing Coalition should contact MCSW Outreach Coordinator Jill Ashton at 617-626-6525 or jill.ashton@state.ma.us.

Wednesday, December 5 (5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.): Worcester Regional Council Meeting

Location: Asa Waters Mansion (123 Elms Street, Milbury)

Details: The Worcester Regional Council will convene for its third meeting at the Asa Waters Mansion from 5:00 – 7:00. The evening will include a discussion about innovative programs to promote women's leadership, an opportunity to network with other attendees and an engaging presentation by Sara Cardoza Ducan. Ms. Ducana is a career strategist and a highly regarded workshop leader; she will be addressing the issue of women's power. For more information please contact MCSW Outreach Coordinator Jill Ashton at 617-626-6525 or jill.ashton@state.ma.us.

Tuesday, December 11 (7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.): Massachusetts Conference for Women

Location: Boston Convention & Exhibition Center (415 Summer Street, Boston)

Details: The Conference is a non-profit, non-partisan, one-day event where Massachusetts women can connect, learn practical and professional strategies from nationally recognized experts, and network with peers. For more information, or to register please visit www.maconferenceforwomen.org.

Commission Officers & Members

Ruth Bramson, Dover

Linda Cavaoli, Worcester

Gloria Coney, Vice Chair, Roxbury

Lianne Cook, Salem

Helen Corbett, Danvers

Erika Ebbel, Cambridge

Donna Finneran, Mattapan

Marianne Fleckner, Chair, Westford

Catherine Greene, Esq., Secretary, Brighton

Elizabeth H. Houlihan, Falmouth

Helen Jackson, MD, W. Roxbury

Jacqueline Lane, Sagamore

Roseanna Means, MD, Wellesley

Angela Menino, Hyde Park

Carol Pimentel, New Bedford

Susana Segat, Cambridge

Madhu Sridhar, Andover

Greer Tan Swiston, Treasurer, Newton

Commission Staff

Linda Brantley, Executive Director

Jill Ashton, Outreach Coordinator

Kim Sebastiao, Program Coordinator

Darlene Kelter, Administrative Assistant

Commission Interns

Heather Panahi (UMASS–Boston)

Tsering Wangmo (Lesley University)

Mariely Mejia (Lesley University)



19 Staniford St., 6th FL
Boston, MA 02114

Phone:

617.626.6520

Fax:

617.626.6530

E-Mail:

mcsw@state.ma.us

Web site:

www.mass.gov/women

**Do you have questions or comments about this
newsletter? If so, please contact**

MCSW@state.ma.us